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AUTHOR Franc, Max B.
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ABSTRACT

Administrative differences between the broad ethical and moral aspects of the mainstream majoritarian culture and one specific subculture--the Mexican American--are discussed. The main thesis is majoritarian inconsistency ("hyprocrisy") and the demand by the minority culture for consistency ("nonhyprocrisy"). The entire society profits from the attention being called to these discrepancies because this emphasis will be the keystone of a new ethic which will give a more useful base for models and tools for (1) identifying early signs of Watergate-types of breakdowns in the future, and (2) overcoming deleterious effects of such breakdowns. That Chicanos entering the establishmentarian processes may exhibit the same kinds of discrepancies they had initially disavowed, does not, however, detract from the validity of the insight itself. It seems that minority youth's focus on such discrepancies is associated with insecurities and frustrations in entering formerly denied mainstream public administration and governmental processes. Thus, some impacts of much-discussed subcultural variations, may be specious to extents that emerging leaders are skimmed off, in this process, with the effect that they do not remain in positions to speak for groups from which they originated. (Author/AH)

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IMPROVING ETHICS AND MORALITY IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE: LOOKING TO MEXICAN-AMERICAN ADMINISTRATORS

by

Max B. Franc
Associate Professor of Political Science
Public Administration Program
California State University, Fresno
Fresno, California 93710

A Section on the Mexican-American
Rocky Mountain Council for Latin American Studies
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In a 1972 study of Mexican-American grade school children, F. Chris García reported that responses from Mexican-American children in four grades--3, 5, 7, and 9--appeared to be more cynical or realistic about what may be expected of the American political system, compared to responses from a control group of Anglo children. When asked to select a definition of democracy, more Mexican-American children agreed that democracy is "where leaders do what they think is best for the people." Compared to Anglo children, more Mexican-American children selected that choice over a next point on the attitude continuum describing democracy as "where leaders do what most people want."[1] Different interpretations have been made in connection with this interesting statistic of Professor García. According to one view, those responses suggest that Mexican-American children are more "sophisticated" about what may be expected of American government and politics.

Looking generally to minorities for new insights about what can be expected of American government and politics is felt by the present writer to constitute a useful approach for the purpose of understanding both majoritarian and minority aspects of broader political processes. Moral expectations of government and politics today, against the background of Watergate and allied experiences, puts a premium on finding new ways of predicting and dealing with ethical and moral breakdowns in the public service. The writer sees some present signs of possible dangers from overreactions to recent events in this sphere. Earlier experiences of overreactions, such as with Sputnik, perceived missile threats, and perceived dangers from the Vietnamese come to mind. It would be ironic if excessive attention, in terms of overreactions of those same kinds, have an undesirable effect of distracting attention from identification of the real causes of ethical and moral breakdowns in the public service.

This paper will focus on what can be learned about the broad ethical and moral aspects of the mainstream, majoritarian culture--

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[1]F. Chris García, "The Political Socialization of Mexican-American Children: the Development of Political System Values," Paper read before panel on Ethnic Socialization in the West, Western Political Science Association, Portland, ORegon, March 24, 1972, Table I, p. 20.

especially from looking to one specific subculture, that of Mexican-Americans. The assumption is made here that it will be useful to focus on areas highlighting discrepancies between (1) ethical and moral standards espoused by the society, and (2) real practices wherever they may be found. The writer feels he has been working in recent years with an area rich in insights--public administration programs oriented toward ethnic and minority publics. In this paper the writer will show that Mexican-American-oriented programs have some interesting things to tell us about broader mainstream values, nonvalues, and the like.

One Contribution from the Mexican-American Subculture: Attention to "Hypocrisy"

Any subculture involves mixtures of values, some consistent, others inconsistent, plus others from those first two categories that overlap one with another. When the political scientist looks to inconsistencies among attitudes and opinions on the part of members of that subculture, this is not for the purpose of criticizing but to look to functional impacts of such inconsistencies. In politics there is the concept of the "political myth," focusing on a belief's impact, rather than whether that belief is valid or invalid. In looking to Latin-originated cultures, one must deal with an important factor of indirection. In the Mexican-American culture this comes out in terms of greater emphasis on protocol and etiquette. One example has to do with ways in which people speak less directly and more politely to respected family members. This comes out in manners of verbal expression, tendencies not to criticize directly, etc. As the political scientist looks to impacts of such indirection or softness on political attitudes of Mexican-Americans, it is possible that this same indirection is also mixed in with other conflicting values of directness. There will be no attempt here to delineate sources of such mixed elements--there may be Latin, Spanish, Indian, and other roots. In response to confrontation with values of the Anglo majoritarian culture, on the other hand, Mexican-Americans--especially young Chicanos--

call for elements of greater directness.[2] This comes out in form of their pointing to discrepancies between what the Anglo says and does. La Raza, Chicano Studies, and other curricular and Movimiento foci provide numerous examples from a history, in the American Southwest, of discrepancies between what the Anglo has said and done.

One main area of reactions observed in dealing with Mexican-American students pertains to disappointments in view of those discrepancies on the part of the Anglo. Such students are in favor of what may be described as a kind of nondiscrepancy; for the present the writer will characterize this with the less valuational term "directness." Some observers would insist on the word "honesty." They would say Mexican-Americans are more "honest" in their demands for consistency between what is said and what is done. According to the above notion of mixed values, however, one must conceive that those same Mexican-Americans critics of the broader culture can not be expected fully to apply those criteria to their own behaviors in their own lives. One reason has to do with their being impacted on by broader Anglo cultural patterns. What must be noted here is that in seeking new insights, the meaning of the insight is more important than evaluation of the person or groups of people who constitute the source of that insight.

The writer feels that this kind of attention called by Mexican-Americans to above kinds of inconsistencies or discrepancies within the mainstream Anglo culture is an important contribution. As a label for this kind of discrepancy or inconsistency the writer will use the

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[2]The writer will stay with the following delineation used in previous materials: "Mexican-American" is used broadly. "Chicano" will refer to Movimiento leaders who feel that relatively direct means must be taken to advance the people of La Raza. There is not overall agreement, among people in the United States of Mexican descent, concerning use of these terms.

term "hypocrisy," defined simply as discrepancy or inconsistency between what one says and what one does.[3] As one expects and demands greater nondiscrepancy in above matters, one moves toward a value which can be called "nonhypocrisy." In the writer's view, emphasis on that latter value will be the keystone of a new ethic which will give a more useful base for models and tools for (1) identifying early signs of Watergate-types of breakdowns in the future, and (2) overcoming deleterious effects of such breakdowns.

According to the above view, meaning of an insight comes from its impact, rather than from evaluation of sources of that insight. To the extent that Chicano youths are entering establishmentarian processes, it may be true that they later exhibit same kinds of discrepancies they had initially disavowed. This exhibiting of the same discrepancies is apparent to someone who works with public administration training programs directed to Mexican-American entry-administrators. It does not, however, detract from validity of the insight itself.

Neither do psychological reasons behind the coming up with such insights discredit validity of those insights. It seems that minority youth's focus on such discrepancies is associated with insecurities and frustrations in entering formerly denied mainstream public administration and governmental processes. This appears to become exacerbated as such entry-administrators "learn the rules," as they move further in the direction of the mainstream culture. It is not surprising to find Chicano youths "yelling, screaming, and protesting" as they nonetheless move in majoritarian directions. Thus some impacts of much-discussed subcultural variations, associated with Mexican-American familial origins, may be specious to extents that emerging leaders are skimmed off, in this process, with the effect that

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[3]Other cultures may have different concepts. Muslim-influenced countries are like some Latin-originated countries in that such a discrepancy is not viewed negatively. The aregument in the Muslim country is that we are human--it is more realistic to admit that people will be discrepant between intent and followthrough--with such discrepancies not to be held against such a person.

they do not remain in positions to speak for groups from which they originated.[4] It becomes increasingly difficult, as the process continues, to assess differences between the Mexican-American subculture and mainstream establishmentarian cultural values that come to dominate such entry-administrators. As was suggested by Professor Servín at a 1973 panel of this Council in Missoula, there may not be substantial functional attitude and opinion differences on the part of such entry-administrators once they start becoming members of the establishment.[5]

Nonhypocrisy Mixed in with Other Elements

It may be that above focus on a new central moral value, here called nonhypocrisy, is the most important contribution of Chicano activistas. Chicano expression of frustrations over such discrepancies appears mixed in with other types of expressive reactions, some of which seem basically to involve style differences. A variety of reactions from Mexican-American entry-administrators in community action and other "poverty" programs point to style differences over what those administrators perceive as the Anglo's fixation with time management, overemphasis on grammatical and written style, overemphasis on traditional North American concepts of economy and efficiency, etc. Criticisms from Mexican-American sources may involve mixtures both of matters of discrepancy, in above-cited terms, and these latter stylistic differences. The writer has been endeavoring to gather attitudes and opinions of Mexican-American and nonminority entry-administrators regarding the subject of efficiency. George Vondermuhl has stressed that, whether dealing with problems oriented toward minorities or broader publics, the central concept of efficiency remains the same.[6] Since that concept involves output divided by input,

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[4]See S. M. Miller, Pamela Roby, and Alwine A. do Vos van Steenwijk, "Creaming the Poor," Transaction (June, 1970), pp. 39-45.

[5]Remarks of Manuel P. Servín at Section on the Mexican-American, Rocky Mountain Council for Latin American Studies, Missoula, Montana, April 20, 1973.

[6]Panel on Ethnic Socialization in the West, supra.

a useful approach, for the purpose of assessing views of Mexican-American community representatives, should be (1) to identify what they see as desired outputs, and (2) to compare the latter with definitions coming from other publics. Such publics can include people who provide funding and programmatic objectives as presently constituted. It appears that there can be fair agreement on the denominator portion of the efficiency formula, i.e., the input variable, which is more readily measurable in terms of cost-input factors.

An example of mixed outputs of programs directed toward minority administrators is found in an attitude and opinion questionnaire study by a student of the writer. Joseph R. Rocha, a Chicano graduate student, interviewed barrio publics concerning attitudes and opinions in connection with Mexican-Americans, originally from the barrio, now employed as planners in the Fresno governmental bureaucracy.[7] Rocha found conflicting reactions. Community respondents expressed disdain for that person insofar as he is perceived as having left his community, no longer caring for that community, no longer caring for that community, and taking on Anglo ways. Some of the respondents, on the other hand, expressed admiration for that person insofar as he is perceived as doing well in "beating the Anglo at his own game."[8]

New Sources of Inputs for Improving Ethics and Morality in the Public Service

One benefit from looking to minority entry-administrators, in new types of community-oriented "poverty" and social action programs, will be to provide new inputs for techniques of identifying, dealing with, and predicting sources of moral and ethical breakdowns in the public service. One of the earlier-cited areas of possible overreactions in connection with present

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[7]See Joseph R. Rocha, "Mexican-Americans in Government: A Study of Attitudinal Differentiations within the Mexican-American Community in the Implementation of Action Programs to Incorporate Mexican-Americans into the Planning Process," (Unpublished Master's Thesis, California State University, Fresno, California, 1972).

[8]Ibid., 62 ff.

instances of seeming corruption in the public service involves the question of written codes of ethics for public administrators. Interviews of Mexican-American entry-administrators on use of written codes to improve or change behaviors have been suggestive. Mexican-American entry-administrators respond that this is typical of the majoritarian, WASP, Anglo style, as they put it. That criticism again suggests reactions to a mixture of substantive and stylistic elements. The writer is inclined to pick up on such criticism from marginal entry-administrators, pointing out that it remains to be seen whether emphasis on written codes will have useful results. One might caution that, if we are to make attempts in this direction of code writing, there should be careful distinctions between matters of (1) ethics and morality, and (2) style. A chief input from activista Chicanos seems to be that the above value of nonhypocrisy should serve as the keystone, if attempts are to be made to improve ethics and morality. This is pointed to both by activista Chicanos outside establishmentarian public administration processes, and those who seem to be at various points along a continuum of moving in public administration establishmentarian directions.

It seems that further evaluation of such code-writing endeavors as well as evaluation of present comments on those Mexican-American entry-administrators will depend on their demonstrable skills in making correct observation about (1) larger-scale processes, and (2) reactions from subgroups. Again we must deal with Professor Servín's implied question whether Mexican-American administrators are basically like or different from nonminority administrators. For the present this is an unanswered question. At this time the writer can only report on what he feels is the trend of thought on the part of minority interviewees. As noted by minority administrators at a Western Political Science Association ad hoc panel in San Diego in 1973, minority administrators in social action programs do not become "more like" nonminority administrators after a period of time; despite a basic difference in that respect, they do, over a period of time, tend to "ally"

themselves with the "administrative establishment" instead of community publics.[9]

The meaning of recent Watergate-type of experiences in terms of impacts on administration of community-oriented programs must await controlled-experience and simulation endeavors at the microscale level. Empirical efforts of those kinds will constitute the most effective approach toward testing general applications and transfer of behavioral principles relating to questions of ethics and morality. But Professor Servín's point concerning whether minority administrators are basically alike or basically unalike remains. He has suggested that differences may be specious. The writer has observed that most Mexican-American administrators talk about differences in attitudes toward time management, emphasis on form, and the like. Despite discussion and apparent agreement that differences do exist, it is possible that such differences have no meaningful impacts except insofar as belief that they do exist operates as an operative variable. Thus, even though such differences be specious in one sense, if participants agree that they are not specious and act on that belief, then elements of self-fulfilling prophecy may enter the picture. This is in line with the concept of political myth mentioned earlier. In other places the writer has given his outline of main subject matter points that should be pinned down in further attitude and opinion research if we are to settle whether (1) such differences are specious, and (2) beliefs and myths in that connection have impacts on day-to-day administration of minority-oriented programs.[10]

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[9]Remarks of Henry Hodge, Legislative Representative, County of San Diego, California, and others at Ad Hoc Panel on the Minority Administrator and Minority-Oriented Programs, Western Political Science Association, San Diego, California, April 5, 1973. The writer would be happy to supply a summary of participants reactions to a list of 10 questionnaire topics in this connection.

The writer goes in more detail into possibilities of culturally related attitudes and opinions in "Minority Attitudes and Opinions that Have Impacts on Administration of Minority-Oriented Programs," Paper read before panel of Pacific Chapter, American Association for Public Opinion Research, Asilomar, California, March 4, 1972; and "Communication, Administration, and Mexican-American Administrators," Paper read before panel of Rocky Mountain Social Science Association, Salt Lake City, Utah, April 29, 1972.

The Chicano entry-administrator's focus on Anglo hypocrisy and need for its detection becomes increasingly dramatic when majoritarian administrators exhibit different expectations of Mexican-American administrators, as against what is expected of majoritarian administrators. Sometimes such differences in expectations are tied to the word "adjustments." Those adjustment can go in either direction. Thus standards can be "lowered," to the career benefit of minority administrators; this may be accompanied by elements of condescension, on the part of Anglos, that may or may not have racist overtones. Thus at least two variables are entering into this problem: (1) consistency or inconsistency between what majoritarian administrators do and say, and (2) possibilities that other, subtle elements come into play in terms of selective perception, on the part of observer and/or observed.

The Matter of "Adjustments"

The broad subject of need for making adjustments should have implications for establishing standards for improving ethics and morality in public administration programs. The question of "adjustments," in terms of present trends of "bending over backwards to redress grievances," has been brought to our attention by ethnic-oriented improvement programs, as well as sincere and not-so-sincere affirmative action programs coming from government. As we attempt to follow affirmative action trends as laid down by present count policies, we must address the nature of such "adjustments." The writer, in working with Chicano activistas who have decided to join regular public administration programs, for better or worse, finds that four types of adjustments may come into play: (1) those on the part of establishmentarian structures, processes, and people; (2) those on the part of the individual Chicano entry-administrator as he moves from his former role to a new modus operandi within mainstream processes; (3) those on the part of community publics--especially barrio publics as indicated in Rocha's questionnaire study; and (4) another realm of adjustment, perhaps on the part of all above three elements, to the conscious realization that adjustments per se are to be made or are being made.

Probably the broadest contribution of Chicano and other activist movements has to do with a type of adjustment which we are all in process of undergoing, that of reevaluating our traditional melting pot model. Functional breakdowns of various kinds in recent years, more pronounced in the ethical and moral areas, are getting us to reconsider some melting pot assumptions. There are other examples from outside the area of administering minority-oriented programs. Some examples involve questions of who are appropriate clients of public education and how should those clients be served; other examples pertain to questions of who have "rights" to be clients and members of governmental bureaucracies.[11]

Benefits of Looking to Spanish-Speaking Subcultures

The writer feels the most important benefit from looking to Spanish-speaking subcultures lies in opening the observer to additional ways of addressing social and political problems. Spanish-speaking subcultures are associated with intact cultures from other countries; by; comparison black subcultures in this country have less intact and less traceable origins from Africa and other places. It is relatively manageable to look to Spanish-influenced cultural sources to find other ways of doing things. Regarding attitudes toward punishing wrongdoers, for example, we can look to another model below the border.

In some ways that Mexican model is more severe; in others it is more humanitarian. An instrumentalist social scientist is interested in looking to additional sources of inputs so he can more effectively identify sources and predict incidence of ethical and moral breakdowns. This instrumentalist outlook provides a base for dealing intelligently with a variety of opinion shocks that might arise as problems arise in these terms. Such shocks can accordingly be viewed as less important than long-run attempts

[11]The writer recommends an interesting lay article which is in favor of reevaluation of traditional American styles of reaching clients: Colin Green, "Public Schools: Myth of the Melting Pot," Saturday Review, Vol. 52 (November, 1969), pp. 84-102.

to organize techniques identifying, predicting, preventing, and ameliorating. The instrumentalist view espoused by the present writer encompasses an attitude toward error and breakdown which is intended to break out of a traditional, Puritan-associated horror of error. One benefit from working with minority administrators is a broadened outlook which opens us to a notion that it is useful to assume beforehand that error and breakdown will occur. Attention can then be put, not on dealing with symptoms, but on (1) dealing with such problems beforehand, and (2) working to lessen impacts when they do occur. In the writer's view what we should be pushing toward is what might be called an ethical or moral audit. The latter may be defined as "an ongoing survey, initiated beforehand, for the purpose of detecting sources of breakdown and error by identifying key variables, better understanding of which will help achieve social, community, and/or organizational objectives."

For the purpose of helping provide techniques for constructing such audits, especially with a view to taking in a wider range of variables as a base, the writer is in favor of looking to Mexican-American sources of criticism, whatever the ideological coloration of the input sources. As stated earlier, there is an assumption in this paper that marginal groups can serve us all by providing new ways of looking at the broad area of ethical and moral breakdown. It goes without saying that marginal sources other than ethnic minorities also have new perspectives that will help us improve ethics and morality in the public service.[13]

There are four areas of learnings that can derive from looking to the Mexican American subculture in particular:

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[12]General concepts behind new developments in management audits are described by the writer in "Assessment of Attitude and Opinion Change Effects of the Communication Audit," Paper read before panel of International Communication Association, Atlanta, GA., April 19, 1972.

[13]One is reminded of comments from the United Auto Workers recommending new efforts to listen to longhair union members who are becoming a greater portion of the labor force and reflect new attitudes. Examples have to do with diminishing satisfactions from primarily pecuniary rewards associated with things like overtime. It may be argued that as such nontraditionalists increase in proportion in the UAW, contract settlements that do not take such attitudes into account will lay bases for long-term frictions rather than consensus.

1. Greater knowledge about subcultures and cultures. The above approach toward taking what is to be gained from addressing subcultural values pertaining to Mexican Americans will give us additional knowledge about (a) that subculture in specific, (b) the broader phenonmenon of subcultures within the mainstream culture, and (c) interfaces between such subcultures and the majoritarian culture. Thus attitudes and opinions of a minority group tell us about both that minority and about the majority. Put one more way, attitudes and opinions of a minority tell us about attitudes and opinions of the majority.[14]

2. Greater knowledge about public administration processes. As new kinds of audit techniques help identify causes of ethical and moral breakdowns, this should be accompanied by greater understanding of general public administration processes. Insights on sources of ethical and moral breakdowns can be used to get at relationships between (a) key input variables involving personality, background of the administrator with respect to types of programs, and other kinds of experiences, and (b) types of efforts exhibited by administrators in programs to overcome ethical and moral breakdowns as well as other discrepancies. Possibilities today for improving ethics and morality in the public service have to do with questions such as whether administrative man is basically susceptible to temptation and corruption. The present writer is not so sure whether primary focus on taking stands on that kind of issue is going to be the most productive way of bringing about improvements in the areas of ethics and morality. First, whatever the stand, that kind of focus is accompanied by tendencies of bringing about self-fulfilling prophecies; second, taking a philosophical stand in this connection may turn out to say more about the observer than the observed. The writer feels the most productive approach for the present will be to study relationships between input variables and desired outcome behaviors. Once those

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[14]The writer does not go so far as to agree with a view, often expressed by Chicano activists, and stated by a Mexican-American social scientist at the above 1972 Western Political Science Assoc. panel. According to that view, problems in training minority entry-administrators are symptoms of need for complete reconceptualization of training programs directed to nonminority public administrators.

relationships are established, then steps such as in-service training programs and other improvement devices can be used to identify, conserve, and teach associated techniques to administrators.

The kind of study espoused here will attempt to identify functional effects of the moral value earlier labeled "nonhypocrisy." It will be interesting to find effects of revulsion against hypocrisy, as expressed by minority public administrators, in terms of energizing moves toward a new ethics and morality in the public service. The writer admits that use of nonhypocrisy as a basis for a new, functional code of morality puts emphasis on what is basically an epistemological value. By this is meant nonhypocrisy is probably related to cognitive satisfactions associated with perceived consistency among perceived parts of a system or subsystem. The possible energizing effects of revulsion against hypocrisy gives one pause to think, when one considers ultimate impacts of youth reactions in recent years, to inconsistencies in American policies regarding Vietnam. It seems clear that moral fervor engendered by those revulsions had strong impacts in terms of policy changes. It should be similarly interesting to identify impacts of moral fervor in connection with minority rebellions, in terms of long-term changes in other national policies.

3. Effects of formalism. One learning from studying Spanish-speaking and other Latin-influenced subcultures has to do with a role played by formalism. By the latter term is meant the notion that setting up and writing down rules goes a long way toward actualizing implementation of those rules. Mexican-American entry-administrators point out that writers of ethical and moral codes have a tendency to exhibit moral snobbery. Minority people quite naturally experience revulsion if it is next found that such codifiers often turn out to break their own codes. This is more dramatic today in view of reports of alleged misbehaviors on the part of top-level administrators in connection with Watergate. Variables often cited as leading to such ethical and moral breakdowns are overconcentration of power, overrigidity, impersonality, relative freedom from control, entrenchment, tie-ins with clienteles, and the like. The writer feels, from working with administrators of minority-oriented programs, that those variables may indeed be contributory to ethical and moral

breakdowns in the public service. Greatest focus at this time, however, should be on efforts to tease out direct influences of variables that appear to be more directly contributory to ethical and moral breakdowns. The writer feels the latter variables are those discussed earlier in this paper: discrepancies exhibited by people who say one thing and do another.

4. Problems of listening. A last area of specific subject matter contributions from Mexican-American administrators has to do with their reactions to one specific kind of discrepancy claimed to be observable among Anglos. This area pertains to discrepancy between (a) intent, in terms of majoritarian public administrators' expressed desires in favor of listening to minority inputs, and (b) lack of performance, that is, not actually hearing such messages as they are being transmitted.[15] Such discrepancies between professed intent and actual behaviors on the part of establishmentarian administrators complicate analysis of trends in public administration programs today. It is difficult to say, for example, whether or not we are today in a consolidation stage wherein there is a possible getting over earlier reactions of horror toward instances of inexperienced administration on the part of minority administrators. It will be interesting to find whether the above problem of listening will change as more minority administrators, especially at the junior-executive level, become absorbed into regular public administration processes. Thus a general research tack can be to continue sorting out all identifiable behavioral and personality variables, especially to identify ways in which minority administrators overcome such listening problems and build new sources of consensus whether or not there are meaningful attitude and opinion differences on the part of the Mexican-American subculture. This is recommended by the writer as the most desirable approach for the purpose of

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[15]Such problems are touched on in Max B. Franc, "Communication, Administration, and Minority Administrators," Paper read before panel of Western Political Science Association, Portland, Oregon, March 24, 1972.

constructing a base for development of new training programs and functional codes of behavior.[16]

[16]The writer is not against written codes of ethics per se. The main objection to present written codes has to do with extents to which they reflect somewhat nonfunctional Puritan-based expectations.